

a surgery but not the money for the prescription drugs that could have prevented the surgery in the first place. So working with Congress, we passed critical legislation that modernizes Medicare, provides seniors with more choices, and gives them better access to prescription drugs.

More than 25 million people with Medicare now have prescription drug coverage, and hundreds of thousands more are enrolling each week. This new coverage is saving seniors money on their drug premiums. The typical senior will end up spending about half of what they used to spend on prescription drugs each year.

Another issue I will discuss with Governors is how to keep America the most innovative and competitive nation in the world. In my State of the Union Address, I announced the American Competitiveness Initiative. Under this initiative, we will double the Federal commitment to the most critical basic research in the physical sciences over the next decade. We will also make the research and development tax credit permanent to encourage businesses and entrepreneurs to increase their investments in innovation. These investments will lead to new technologies that will offer a better life for our citizens and keep our economy strong.

My Competitiveness Initiative will also give American children a firm grounding in math and science to prepare them for the jobs of the 21st century. I propose that we train 70,000 additional high school teachers over the next 5 years to lead Advanced Placement courses in math and science and bring in 30,000 math and science professionals to teach in classrooms and give extra help to students who struggle with math. By ensuring that our children are prepared to succeed in life, we will ensure that America's economy succeeds in the world.

When I meet the Governors, I will also talk about our energy strategy. I propose an Advanced Energy Initiative to take advantage of new technologies. Under this initiative, we will change how we power our homes and offices by investing in clean coal technology, solar and wind power, and clean, safe nuclear energy. And we will change how we power our cars and trucks by investing in hybrid vehicles, pollution-free cars that run on hy-

drogen, and alternative fuels like ethanol and biodiesel. By applying the talent and innovative spirit of our citizens, we will move beyond a petroleum-based economy, protect our environment, and make America less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

I'll also discuss with Governors our progress in the war on terror. The States are playing a vital role in the war effort through the contributions of their National Guard units. During the past 2 years, many Governors have traveled to Iraq or Afghanistan to visit with the men and women from their States who are serving in freedom's cause. These Governors have seen firsthand the courage of our troops and their dedication to the mission. Last month, Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee visited Iraq and Afghanistan with three of his fellow Governors. He said, "People back home need to realize just how proud they should be of our men and women here. It is obvious these troops remain upbeat and focused on ridding the world of terrorists."

To improve health care, keep America competitive, achieve greater energy independence, and protect our Nation, we must put aside politics and focus on what is best for the future of our country. America's Governors are good allies in this effort, and I look forward to working with them in the year ahead.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on February 24 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on February 25. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 24 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

## Remarks at a Dinner for the Nation's Governors

*February 26, 2006*

Good evening. Welcome to the White House. Laura and I are glad you're here. We really look forward to this evening. It's good to see some old friends, and I want to welcome two new Governors—Governor Corzine and Governor Tim Kaine. It happens

to be his birthday. The First Lady said he was tired of getting birthday songs, so we'll skip it. *[Laughter]*

We've also got some Governors here who will be here for the last time—some by choice, some by law. We thank you for your service. One of them happens to be Brother. Come on back, you know. But all of you who won't be back here, thank you for serving your States and our country.

I like being around Governors. Governors know how to set agendas; Governors know how to rally people to convince the legislature to get results; Governors are results-oriented people. So I picked a few for my Cabinet, including two Mikes—Mike Leavitt and Mike Johanns. They're doing great jobs. I appreciate the rest of my Cabinet being here, even though you aren't Governors. *[Laughter]* You're welcome to have a meal. *[Laughter]*

Look forward to working with you to help shape the future of the country. You know, I told the people, we don't need to fear the future because we intend to shape the future. And Governors play a big role in that. You got a big role in helping to protect our country, and I want to thank you for understanding we're still at war and that we need your solid support in defending our country. Our most important duty is to protect the American people.

Our economy is strong, and I mean to keep it that way, with good tax policy, both at the Federal and State level. We've got to make sure we're less dependent on foreign sources of oil to keep our economy strong. We've got to make sure that our education system—make sure every child is educated, and with special emphasis on math and science. This country is a great country, and we've led the world, and we'll continue to lead the world. And I look forward to working with you on such an agenda.

This is historic times, and I know you know that. And so I want to thank you for your service to our great Nation. I want to thank you for bringing dignity and honor to the offices you hold. And so now I'd like to offer a toast to the Governors of the United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:03 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jon S. Corzine of

New Jersey; Gov. Tim Kaine of Virginia, and his wife, Anne Holton; and Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida.

## Remarks to the National Governors Association Conference

February 27, 2006

Good morning. Thanks for coming. I enjoyed it last night; I hope you did too. It was a lot of fun. And thank you all for giving me a chance to come by. What I thought I'd do is say a few things and then answer some questions, if you have any.

We have got a chance to achieve some big things for the country, to lay the stage for peace and to keep America in the lead. And these are goals that both Republicans and Democrats should share. You know, there's a lot of politics here in Washington, so it's—when you say, “Well, you know, it's a Republican goal to make America competitive,” I just don't agree with that. It should be a national goal. It's a national goal to protect our people. And therefore, it requires a lot of collaboration throughout all aspects of government. And no better collaborators to implement good policy than our Governors. So thanks for giving me a chance to come and share some insights with you.

First, one question that ought to be confronting everybody is, how do we keep this economy of ours strong? A couple of notable exceptions, like our friends in Michigan and Ohio in particular—maybe Washington State—the overall economy is in great shape. People are working; productivity is up; people own their homes; small businesses are flourishing. And the fundamental question is, what can we do together to keep it that way? Part of it is to be wise with taxpayers' money.

I congratulate the States that have done a good job of increasing their surpluses; it's a good thing. I can remember a couple of years ago when we were a little worried about deficits at the State level. That's changed. Surplus and tax policy—wise with people's money—all go hand in hand in terms of making sure America remains competitive. I believe if you take money out of people's pockets, it hurts economic vitality and growth.